THE EMERGENCE OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS IN ERIK SATIE'S *PARADE*: THE SEARCH FOR SURREALISM IN SOUND

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This thesis investigates possible connections between the music of Erik Satie (1866-1925) and the later surrealist movement, turning to *Parade* (1917) in a case study that seeks to understand surrealism in music through the idea of self-exploration, a well-established interpretive approach in studies of surrealism in the visual arts. This thesis seeks to redefine surrealism in music not as a set of concrete musical characteristics, but as a collection of techniques meant to evoke subconscious turbulence by blurring the boundary between the "outside" and "inside," between conscious and subconscious, leading to a new discovery of higher or deeper truth. Satie's music aligns with the psychoanalytic elements of the discourse on surrealism. Psychoanalysis, pioneered by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and his followers in the 1890s in Vienna, permeated France around the time of the creation of the work. It inspired early surrealist techniques like automatism, illusory formal structures, collage, and stylistic allusion. This thesis demonstrates that such techniques can be discerned throughout *Parade*, not only in Satie's music, but also in its scenario, staging, costumes, and choreography. As such, *Parade* was a foundational work for the surrealist movement, with Satie's music contributing with the other media equally to the emotional and psychological impact of the ballet.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The surrealist ballet *Parade* (1917) was the result of collaboration by a group of modernists during World War I. The French novelist Marcel Proust viewed the work as "nourishment [in] this age of famine"[1] due not only to its humorous and lighthearted nature, but also to its combination of the spontaneity of street performances and the seriousness of the concert hall.[2]

Most who attended the premiere at the Théâtre du Châtelet in May 1917, however, do not seem to have agreed with Proust's positive judgment.[3] Despite the elite artistic status of its creators, at the time of its premiere *Parade* inspired controversy. Debates focused especially on the absurd elements within the ballet. Erik Satie (1866-1925) incorporated mechanical sounds from everyday objects into his music.[4] Jean Cocteau (1889-1963), who wrote the libretto for *Parade*, took direct inspiration from performance sideshows that went by the same name.[5] With choreography by Léonide Massine (1896-1979) from the *Ballets Russes* and music by Satie, the ballet was described as "openly abandoning any sense of traditional beauty or grace in its setting of music and dance."[6] The sets and costumes were designed by Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), who for the first time applied the art of cubism to a ballet.[7] In their unconventional collaborative effort, the creators of *Parade* wished to create a sensation in French artistic circles.

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[1] Quoted in Mary Davis, *Classic Chic: Music, Fashion, and Modernism* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 118.
[2] Davis, *Classic Chic*, 118.
[3] James Harding, *Erik Satie* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), 158.
[4] Steven M. Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian: from Cabaret to Concert Hall* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 481.
[5] Alan M. Gillmor, *Erik Satie* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988), 198.
[6] Susan Calkins, "Modernism in Music and Erik Satie's Parade," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 41, no. 1 (June 2010): 6.
[7] Deborah M. Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade: From Street to Stage* (London: Sotheby's Publications, 1991), 30-2.

The thesis investigates possible connections between Satie's music and the later surrealist movement. These connections date to the time of the premiere. Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918), the French poet, art critic, and playwright, described *Parade* after attending the rehearsal of the ballet in the lengthy program book as "*sur-réaliste*," possibly in reference to Cocteau's own description of the work as a "*réaliste*" work.[8] Satie had no plan to be a part of the surrealist movement, which later evolved tremendously and left a long-lasting legacy.[9] Yet there are ways of connecting Satie's music to surrealism. This thesis explores *Parade* as a case study that seeks to understand and define surrealism in music. I do so through the idea of self-exploration, a well-established interpretive approach in the history of surrealism in the visual arts. Satie's music in conjunction with the work of his collaborators was a crucial part of the associative, dreamlike experience created by the ballet.

This thesis follows a methodological path taken by scholars of literature and art history, where studies of surrealism flourish. A recurring concern in such studies is the connection between the surrealists and the idea of self-exploration through different acts of artistic creation and expression.[10] The ideas of dreaming and the subconscious play significant roles in the realm of surrealist literature and visual arts in part because the ideology of surrealism was adapted from Freud's approach to psychoanalysis.[11] In other words, psychoanalytic approaches are

[8] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 197.
[9] Robert Orledge, *Satie Remembered*, ed. Reinhard G. Pauly, trans. Roger Nichols (Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1995), 203.
[10] Dawn Ades, Michael Richardson, and Krzysztof Fijalkowski, eds., *The Surrealism Reader: An Anthology of Ideas* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015), 10.
[11] Automatism is especially relevant here, as it closely parallels to Sigmund Freud's use of free association in psychotherapy as Shaun McNiff justifies its presence in art therapy in *Art as Medicine* (Boulder: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1992) p. 49, "within the surrealist revolution, the dream not only served as the model of automatic expression and psychic emanation but also affirmed the ability of every person to generate unusual imagery." According to the surrealist ideal, McNiff further illustrates his point by quoting William S. Rubin, *Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1968), 64; "art would be a means of expression, and instrument of self-discovery, not an *end* to be savored."

unavoidable for interpretive scholarship on surrealist writings and paintings.[12] This thesis therefore turns to psychoanalysis to look at *Parade* and the wealth of historical sources that surround it in a different light.[13]

This thesis aims to apply definitions of surrealism put forth in manifestos by Apollinaire and André Breton (1896-1966) to *Parade*, looking at it as an artistic medium for self-exploration achievable through the state of automatism that brings the subconscious to the surface. Methodologically, this thesis therefore aligns with the work of scholars like William S. Rubin, who emphasizes the extent to which Breton borrowed from Freud's approach to psychotherapy.[14] I seek similarly to explore how surrealism may have been heard in the music of *Parade* by investigating contemporaneous discourse on psychoanalytic culture, pioneered by Freud and his followers in the 1890s in Vienna, permeating France around the time of the creation of the work.[15]

Even though many composers were actively engaged in the surrealist movement, the definition of surrealism in music remains unclear. On the one hand, some scholars are willing to entertain a strong connection between composers like Satie and the surrealist movement. Roger Shattuck, for example, writes that "Dadaists and surrealists drove provocation to its violent agony and discovered Satie as one of the few musicians outrageous enough to suit their purpose."[16] Shattuck regards Satie as a composer who was willing to incorporate provocation, a core quality of surrealism, into his music. Max Paddison, on the other hands, describes Adorno's position on surrealism in music more generally, which focuses less on contents but more on the

[12] Rubin, *Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage*, 63-4.
[13] The prevailing view has been to consider *Parade* in relation to cubism. See Calkins, "Modernism in Music and Erik Satie's Parade," 14.
[14] Rubin, *Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage*, 63.
[15] Keith Aspley, "Psychoanalysis," in *Historical Dictionary of Surrealism* (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2010), 402.
[16] Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years* (New York: Anchor Books, 1961), 184.

musical contexts. As surrealist music "juxtaposes its devalued fragments in a montage-like manner," new definitions would emerge and "[enable] them to yield up new meaning within a new aesthetic unity."[17] Adorno observes how the original musical contexts are lost through the connotative implication of the newly introduced musical elements. Yet according to current scholarship, the ways that scholars define surrealism in sound, whether through the musical content or context, remain largely disconnected from the complexities of this aesthetic movement as documented in numerous primary sources.

The lack of consensus in current scholarship regarding sonic or musical surrealism, then, allows room for a new approach. The solution to music's surrealist problem may lie beyond simply identifying a definable musical style. I therefore seek to understand the word "surrealism" by examining the production of *Parade* as a whole.[18] Despite the collaborative nature of the movement, secondary literature on surrealism has fallen in line with traditional disciplinary divisions. Consider, for example, Daniel Albright's statement on *Parade*:

> The great Modernist collaborations all survive as fragments . . . What is *Parade* today? Picasso's sketches belong to the world of Picasso studies; Satie's score is an artifact of musicology; Cocteau's scenario, which seemed so indispensable to Satie and Picasso, has been fully dispensed with. . . it was from beginning to end, an exercise in coordinated incongruity.[19]

My thesis seeks to disrupt this tendency to adhere to disciplinary divisions, aiming instead to define the idea of surrealism in sound by focusing on the psychological implications of the music in context and prove that music was part of the surrealist movement from the beginning. While *Parade* was the product of a time when the many losses from the First World

[17] Max Paddison, *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 90.
[18] The governing idea of this thesis to interpret and analyze all elements of *Parade* together as a multimedia whole, although not completely supported and discussed thoroughly, specifically on the concrete interpretative methodology of such line of thinking, was first introduced in Calkins, "Modernism in Music and Erik Satie's Parade," 14.
[19] Quoted in Calkins, "Modernism in Music and Erik Satie's Parade," 6.

War produced a deep and palpable sense of anxiety, the work was undeniably charged not only with deep psychiatric concerns, but more fundamentally with a sense that feelings of sanity were unreliable. My study of *Parade* demonstrates how the ballet acted as a forum for self-exploration for its creators and audience in an increasingly unpredictable world.

CHAPTER 2

PARADE: COLLABORATION, CREATION, RECEPTION

For French-speaking audiences, a "*Parade,*" according to *Larousse,* is "a burlesque scene played outside a sideshow booth to entice spectators inside."[20] The collaborators' aim to incorporate high- and low-brow arts simultaneously in the ballet reflects their artistic lives prior to the production. In this chapter, the background information of the creators' lives and stylistic influences, as well as some details about the original production, aid analysis of the early perception of the ballet as a surrealist work. I seek to contextualize more fully the collaborators' advertisement of the work as "realistic," as well as the general audience's description of *Parade* as a "child-like" and "silly" ballet. Although the most widely-cited definitions of surrealism postdate *Parade* by several years, my historical analysis reveals a connection between contemporary notions of "realism" and "sur-realism," as Apollinaire used the term. Considering *Parade* in its entirety helps suggest the idea that music was part of the surrealist movement from the beginning.

Collaborators

Written by Jean Cocteau (1889-1963), *Parade* presents the simple story of street performers and their managers tirelessly trying to lure an audience into seeing the spectacle that will happen on the inside of a circus tent. In order to achieve an effect of the mixture between low and high arts, between street performers and refined ballet, Sergei Diaghilev (1872-1929), the patron and impresario of the Ballets Russes, chose Léonide Massine (1896-1979), a young aspiring and creative choreographer from his ballet troupe, to tackle the work. The decorations, sets, and costumes that were created and designed by Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) only fueled the

[20] *Grand Larousse encyclopédique,* s.v. "Parade."

unforeseen uproar from the conservative audience as, for the first time, cubist décors were fully incorporated into ballet. Erik Satie (1866-1925) wrote the music based mostly on Cocteau's scattered imagery, providing the foundation for the other collaborators to develop their own visions for the ballet, an experimental act that united all the collaborators' efforts in creating new momentum in the Parisian art scene.

Librettist Jean Cocteau was born into an upper-middle-class family.[21] His love for the theater developed starting when was just a boy: his first experiences of the glamorous and prestige-filled environment of the theater were encouraged by his social, concert-going mother. According to Cocteau, the infatuation started with the scent of his mother's perfume and the "shimmering beauty of her dresses as she prepared to go out for an evening at the Comédie-Française or the Opéra."[22] From bedtime program reading to toy theatres, Cocteau developed a condition that later he referred to as "theatretis."[23] Cocteau's interest, however, extended beyond a view from the audience of the ongoing spectacle. He was similarly interested in the view from the backstage, leading him to pursue an interest in work as a stage director and librettist, before embarking on a celebrated career as a groundbreaking cinematic *auteur*.[24]

At the beginning of his career in the theatrical industry, Cocteau describes his aesthetic in a letter to his mother, mentioning that he prefers "all the principal aspects of the ballet" including "the snob side so well exploited by Diaghilev, Astruc, and Madame Greffulhe."[25] By associating himself with these artistic elites, Cocteau places himself among the most prestigious French artistic circle including Diaghilev's traveling Russian ballet troupe, the *Ballets Russes*, with

[21] Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 43.
[22] Neal Oxenhandler, *Scandal & Parade: The Theater of Jean Cocteau* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1957), 41.
[23] Quoted in Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 43.
[24] Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 43.
[25] Quoted in Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 43.

whom Cocteau soon collaborated on *Parade*.[26]

Yet *Parade* was not a strictly elitist work. At fifteen, Cocteau developed "an opium habit as well as an attraction to life on the fringe of society"[27] after running away to Marseilles, a place known for its red-light district, and stayed there for two years. Although Cocteau returned to his fashionable lifestyle in Paris, where he presented himself in all the right salons among titled society, he reportedly remained "comfortable in bohemian and blue collar as well as *haut bourgeois* worlds."[28] *Parade* artistically interprets and represents low-brow and popular culture of the early twentieth century. This topic reflected not just Cocteau's dual interests, but also a growing interest among some artists in the activities of blue-collar French culture.[29] Some of the artistic elites, however, reacted negatively to the subject matter. According to Cocteau, they "were outraged when [Picasso] accepted the invitation to design the décor for *Parade*"[30] partly because it went against the grain of the upper classes' exclusive and selective artistic tastes. In 1916 this tension between the high and low-brow arts resulted in opposition, as Cocteau and Picasso left to work with the production in Rome. Cocteau reported that "Picasso laughed to see our painter friends grow smaller as the train pulled away."[31] What Picasso's former fellow artists did not know at the time, however, was that, according to Deborah Rothschild, *Parade* brought "for the first time [a unity of] collaboration [between] Right Bank elitist enterprise [and] a notoriously Left Bank bohemian artist."[32] Clearly, *Parade* was an experimental multimedia piece

[26] Werner Spies, "*Parade*: an Antinomical Demonstration. Picasso Grapples with Achille Vianelli's *Scene populari di Napoli*," in *Picasso: The Italian Journey 1917-1924* (New York: Rizzoli, 1998), 112.
[27] Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 43.
[28] Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 43.
[29] Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 32.
[30] Quoted in Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 47.
[31] Quoted in Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 47.
[32] Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 43.

that tested the boundary between street and high art. *Parade* was, for Cocteau, a way to seek balance between the two worlds.

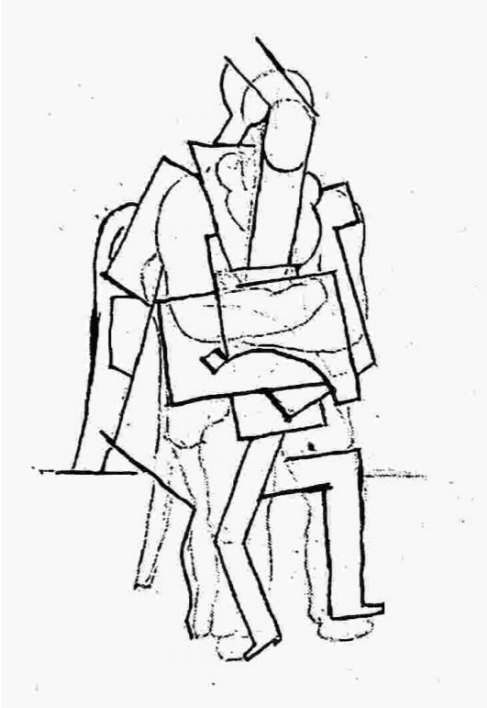

Figure 1: Picasso's sketch from the year of 1915 from his catalog, *Zervos II*. While the sketch is largely in cubist style, the faded trace under the geometric complex reveals a realistic drawing of human anatomy.

Picasso, unlike Cocteau and Diaghilev, was not born into privilege.[33] His artistic ideas stemmed from a love of popular entertainments like puppet shows, traveling fairs, circuses, bullfights, café concerts, and silent film slapstick comedy.[34] *Parade*'s decoration and costume designs demonstrate a mixture of styles, specifically of realism and cubism, as seen in the contrasted stylistic depictions of the ballet curtain, done in realistic style, and the cubist sets and costumes only revealed once its curtain drawn. Werner Spies notes that Picasso's curtain—a late addition to the production—"utterly [modified] the whole atmosphere of the ballet."[35] Spies also notes that this juxtaposition of cubism and realism was entirely in keeping with Picasso's style,

[33] Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 38.
[34] Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 38.
[35] Spies, "*Parade*: an Antinomical Demonstrarion," 63-4.

writing that "from 1914 on, from the moment Braque left—marking the end of the intersubjective elaboration of Cubist language—the themes in Picasso's drawings were treated alternatively in terms of Cubism and of Realism" as seen in his works from this period (see Figure 1).[36] By complicating the distinction between the two styles, Picasso's new strategy led to "alternately hot and cold reception," which eventually created "considerable problems in terms of reception."[37] By juxtaposing styles, Picasso challenged his critics and audience to develop interpretations that were not necessarily tied to stylistic labels. In this way, his multivalent work challenged the separation of styles and their associated social values, hierarchies, and statuses.

Like Cocteau and Picasso, the choreographer of the ballet, Léonide Massine, was similarly torn between two identities. Massine was born to a middle-class family and spent most of his childhood in a flat in Moscow. Both of his parents were musical and worked professionally with orchestras and opera companies. Young Massine loved dancing and playing simple folk songs on the mouth-organ. According to his autobiography, "I was very much the baby of the family, constantly teased about my solitary dancing, particularly by [my little sister], who would call me 'the circus dancer', to which I would retort 'Baba-Yaga' (old witch)."[38] Little did the choreographer knew at the time that "the circus dancer" would become his most controversial contribution to an avant-garde ballet of the twentieth century. It was not until a visit from a family friend, Madame Chernova, that the idea of him going to pursue an artistic career would cross the mind of his parents. Massine recalled the words of Madame Chernova to his mother. "You have three sons who are engineers," she said, "but Léonide obviously has artistic and musical talents. Why not give him the chance to develop them?"[39] Massine was enthusiastic

[36] Spies, "*Parade*: an Antinomical Demonstrarion," 66.
[37] Spies, "*Parade*: an Antinomical Demonstrarion," 66-7.
[38] Léonide Massine, *My Life in Ballet*, ed. Phyllis Hartnoll and Robert Rubens (Bristol: Macmillan, 1968), 13.
[39] Quoted in Massine, *My Life in Ballet, 21.*

about her suggestion, and soon after, to his surprise, his parents arranged for him to take the entrance examination at the Moscow School of Theater.[40] Although Massine's training consisted of intensive ballet lessons as well as acting, his passion remained closer to the art of drama.[41] Drama thus became part of his choreographic inspiration, especially for *Parade* where the conventional ballet formulae "could not accommodate the activities of the Managers and the three fairground acts."[42] Massine turned to the art of pantomime to fulfil his vision of a ballet that calls for the union of the expressivity of the street and the elegance of the stage arts.[43]

By the time he wrote the music for *Parade,* Erik Satie was earning a living as a pianist at the Montmartre cabarets by night and composing sacred ballets and gothic operas by day, making him a perfect choice for a project already filled with stylistic juxtapositions.[44] John P. Supko sheds light on Satie's lifestyle, which is full of what he terms "deliciously ironic contradictions."[45] He explains that these contradictions have become part of Satie's charm, explaining that "we prefer our Satie poor yet somehow natty, mischievous yet chaste, gregarious yet monkish, with his dozen or so identical unworn velvet suits, ninety-nine handkerchiefs, the two grand pianos, stacked one on top of the other, which he 'never played,' and of course, the ubiquitous umbrellas, accessorized even on the sunniest of days."[46] Unsurprisingly, the lighthearted, humorous, and witty aspects of Satie's nature speak the loudest to the public, as they became the essential components in how most critics and historians view his canonic *oeuvre*.[47]

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[40] Massine, *My Life in Ballet*, 21.
[41] Massine, *My Life in Ballet*, 29.
[42] Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 90.
[43] Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 90.
[44] Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 87.
[45] John P. Supko, "Points and Lines: The Musical Language of Erik Satie" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2009), 3.
[46] Supko, "Points and Lines," 6.
[47] Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 87.

Despite Satie's satirical criticism of bourgeois artistic society, his strong desire to be recognized as a serious composer and find a place within the "privileged layer of society" was "unmistakable."[48] Like his collaborators, then, he too created works that defied categorization because they broke boundaries. As a result, colleagues and reviewers often criticized Satie's composition as being "simplistic and lacking in skillful orchestration," sometimes citing the story of him prematurely leaving the Conservatoire de Paris.[49] Validation of these claims emanated, in part, from the composer's decision to seek additional instruction at the age of forty. Satie "showed the seriousness in returning to the classroom" at the Schola Cantorum, where he polished his craftmanship under the instruction of teachers who were, in some cases, several years younger than he.[50] Ultimately, it was Satie's self-consciousness that brought the composer back to school, presumably in an attempt to untangle and understand his own difficulties.[51] His struggles may have been tied, moreover, to his unrealistic ambitions. According to Supko, "no composer had ever before made such demands of himself."[52] He acted as his own "*porteur de grosses pierres*,"[53] The "large stones," in this case, are a metaphor for Satie's ambitious project to create a union of architecture and painting in music, a project that Supko likens to the mythological task of Sisyphus.[54] The work that Satie opted for was "no less unmanageable than [Sisyphus'] mammoth boulder,"[55] and—without help from other collaborators whose artistic ideals aligned with Satie's—the union of painting, design, and dance in music would not be possible.

[48] Calkins, "Modernism in Music and Erik Satie's Parade," 7.
[49] Calkins, "Modernism in Music and Erik Satie's Parade," 7.
[50] Calkins, "Modernism in Music and Erik Satie's Parade," 7.
[51] Calkins, "Modernism in Music and Erik Satie's Parade," 7.
[52] Supko, "Points and Lines," 6.
[53] Supko, "Points and Lines," 6.
[54] Supko, "Points and Lines," 7.
[55] Supko, "Points and Lines," 7.

Creation/Premiere

The anecdote that marks the beginning of work on *Parade* has rightly become famous. Diaghilev, as he was walking from the theater one evening, said to Cocteau, "Étonne-moi, Jean."[56] The poet spent five years trying to make such an impact on the impresario; as he states, "finally, in 1917, the opening night of *Parade*, I did astound him."[57] A few years before 1917, Cocteau had been developing ideas for a collaborative ballet. When he saw a performance of Satie's music on 18 April 1916, he was certain that Satie could be "a wild card, and for that very reason might help him 'astonish' Diaghilev."[58] After Cocteau and Satie had decided to work together to create "something new," the young poet was unfortunately pulled away from the project to resume his duties with the ambulance corps. Confused and baffled, Satie hardly knew what to make of "Cocteau's free associations," the telegraphic notes of the poet's conception of the characters.[59] Cocteau had been courting Picasso to agree to design the sets and costumes for his project for a while, but it was Satie, with whom Picasso had corresponded earlier, who convinced him to join the team.[60]

Cocteau saw himself as the middleman between Picasso and Satie; he even referred to the new project as "the union of musician and painter."[61] This perception of unity, however, did not endure throughout the creative process. The individual collaborators turned *Parade* into something more experimental, a piece that responded positively to the wilder side of their creativity. At first, Cocteau stated, "I stand between them, giving a hand to each,"[62] without knowing that Picasso and Satie would soon work so well together that he would occasionally feel

[56] Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian*, 467.
[57] Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 30.
[58] Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian*, 467.
[59] Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian*, 468-9.
[60] Harding, *Erik Satie*, 156.
[61] Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian*, 470.
[62] Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian*, 470.

that he was "excluded from the party."[63] In the meantime, Satie was working vigorously on the score, especially since Picasso and Satie quickly "understood each other so far as Parade was concerned and were even able to veto some of Cocteau ideas."[64] After only two months, the project appeared to be ready for a formal presentation to Diaghilev, who brought Léonide Massine to the project as a choreographer.

Complex ideas and stylistic juxtapositions soon emerged during preparation of the ballet with the *Ballets Russes* in Rome in their studio at the Piazza Venezia.[65] It was at this point that Massine became more fully involved. As soon as Satie had presented him with his "witty, satirical score," the choreographer found that the music, "with its subtle synthesis of jazz and ragtime, offered [him] excellent material on which to base a number of new dance patterns."[66] Cocteau, whose suggestions "amused and sometimes irritated Diaghilev," pushed the envelope concerning inclined paradox imbedded in the plot.[67] In his autobiography, Massine documents the process of his choreographic work in detail, describing his own character, the Chinese conjurer:

> Dressed in a mandarin jacket and floppy trousers, I marched stiffly round the stage jerking my head at each step. Then going to the centre I bowed to the audience and began my act. I was at first unable to decide what sort of tricks this type of performer would do, but when I had demonstrated the opening phases of my dance to Cocteau, he suggested that I should go through the motions of swallowing an egg. The idea appealed to me. With an elaborate flourish I pretended to produce an egg from my sleeve and put it in my mouth. When I had mimed the action of swallowing it, I stretched out my arms, slid my left leg sidewards till I was almost sitting down, and with my left hand pretended to pull the egg from the toe of my shoe. The whole thing took only a few minutes, but it had to be done with the most clearly defined movements and broad mime.[68]

[63] Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian*, 470.
[64] Harding, *Erik Satie*, 156.
[65] Massine, *My Life in Ballet*, 101.
[66] Massine, *My Life in Ballet*, 102.
[67] Massine, *My Life in Ballet*, 101-2.
[68] Massine, *My Life in Ballet*, 103.

This close connection to the art of pantomime and acting, Massine's childhood passion and a focal part of his training at the theater school, transformed *Parade* from a more traditional ballet into a what was described as a "realistic" work, a term that later became the official marketing subtitle of the production.[69]

In the arts, realism broadly suggests depicting things accurately and objectively. Yet realism can mean more than just verisimilitude. According to *The Oxford Dictionary of Art*, another facet of realism, one adopted by Cocteau and the collaborators, "carries with it the suggestion of the rejection of conventional beautiful subjects, or of idealization, in favour of a more down-to-earth approach, often with a stress on low life or the activities of the common man."[70] *Parade* offers this kind of proletarian "realism," similar to the Italian *verismo*, a movement in Italian literature and, subsequently, opera. The depiction of Achille Vianeli's *Taverna* (Figure 2)[71] in Picasso's stage curtain for the ballet (Figure 3),[72] for example, demonstrates one of the egalitarian approaches that were well-integrated into *Parade*.[73] Picasso's pencil drawings in the same style of the theater scene at the Teatro San Carlo, were among his obsessions during the trip in Italy,[74] all of which translated into the curtain that shows what Massine termed the "sleezy charm and camaraderie of circus life."[75] This down-to-earth approach in the music, scenery, and choreography strongly suggests a critical stance towards the "snobbish" crowd of the ballet audience.

[69] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 197.
[70] Ian Chilvers. "Realism," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[71] Spies, "*Parade*: an Antinomical Demonstrarion," 63.
[72] Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 20-1.
[73] Spies, "*Parade*: an Antinomical Demonstration," 63. and Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 39.
[74] Spies, "*Parade*: an Antinomical Demonstration," 63.
[75] Massine, *My Life in Ballet*, 106.

Figure 2: *The Taverna*, the group of people is sitting on the right side of the drawing while the two musicians are shown on the left.

Figure 3: *Rideau rouge*, the performers are resting backstage on the right side of the canvas while overseeing the fantastical show on the left.

On the morning of the premiere, Cocteau wrote in to the newspaper *Excelsior*, advertising *Parade* as a source of laughter even "at this most difficult time," emphasizing the slapstick nature of the ballet. He then states further, "it was also appropriate . . . to do justice for the first time to the true meaning of 'realism.'"[76] The librettist accurately captures the essence of the ballet by naming *Parade* a "*Ballet Réaliste*," referring to the representation of popular culture. Parisian ballet-goers were completely unprepared for this intrusion of street art in the concert hall, including a pseudo-oriental entertainer (popular in the first quarter of the twentieth century), an American girl number (taken directly from the current trends in film), an acrobatic number (imitating the popular circus tightrope walkers), and lastly a comedic horse (performed by two dancers, as it was at the Cirque Médrano.)[77] As the show progressed, the circus horse "proved to be the last straw for a number of Diaghilev's 'cher snobs' whose irritation was mounting with each act,"[78] a reaction completely unforeseen, especially as the scene was well-loved by the performers during the rehearsal.[79] The reaction of the "cher snobs" in the audience toward this untraditional ballet was a result of the upheld *status quo* permeated within French bourgeois society, something that the collaborators of *Parade* were likely trying to critique.

Surrealist Reception of *Parade*

Threaded through the early reception of *Parade* are descriptions that speak to the ballet's ability to evoke a new kind of experience through its use of music and sound. A commentary on Satie's contribution to the ballet by Georges Auric in 1917 demonstrates some deeper psychological associations between the subject matter, the music, and the perceived state of mind

[76] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 197.
[77] Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 91-7.
[78] Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 97.
[79] Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 97.

of the composer.

> The terrible mysteries of China, the little American girl's night-club melancholy, the astonishing gymnastic feats of the acrobats—all the sadness of the circus is here—the nostalgia of the hurdy-gurdy which will never play Bach fugues. Satie's score is planned so as to serve as a musical background to the scenic noises and percussion which occupy the foreground. In this way it is made very humbly subservient to that 'reality' which stifles the nightingale's song beneath the noise of tramcars.[80]

Auric is particularly interested in the associations that can be drawn from Satie's musical sounds. "The nightingale's song beneath the noise of tramcars" alludes to Cocteau's idea of "a musical background suggestive [of] noises such as sirens, typewriters, aeroplanes and dynamos."[81] Though most of these industrial sounds, as proposed by the librettist, did not end up in the live performances of the ballet due to material difficulties and concerns about volume, Satie had compromised in places to match the absurdity of Cocteau's vision.[82] Like the hurdy-gurdy that will never be able to play a Bach fugue, street art will never earn a place among Western high art. The score of *Parade*, rather, aspires to represent the acceptance of a newly modernized reality against the sustained tension between the old and the new in the arts.

Like Auric, poet Guillaume Apollinaire heard and saw in *Parade* a new formulation of the relationship between the arts and the modern world. He was invited to write a program note for the ballet, resulting in a lengthy description that soon became the manifesto of what he called "*l'esprit nouveau*":

> the New Spirit which, finding today an opportunity to show itself, will not fail to attract the enlightened and will look forward to transforming arts and manners from top to bottom amid universal rejoicing. For it is logical to wish art and manners to keep up with industrial and scientific progress.[83]

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[80] Quoted in Rollo H. Myers, *Erik Satie* (New York: Dover Publication, 1968), 51.
[81] Quoted in Rollo H. Myers, *Erik Satie* (New York: Dover Publication, 1968), 50.
[82] Myers, *Erik Satie*, 50-1.
[83] The part of the program note is quoted in James Harding, *Erik Satie* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), 158-9, however, the assertion of how the program note has become the "manifesto of the New Spirit" is rather discussed in Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 197.

Like Auric, Apollinaire would see the arts engaging more thoroughly with the modern world, and in more egalitarian ways. Cocteau's ideology of "realism," a subject drawn from ordinary, everyday life, was therefore well embedded in Apollinaire's conception of the ballet, too. In the end, however, *Parade* signifies more than a union between street art and high art. The collaborators, as we have seen, came to the project viewing such a union in ways that were both deeply personal and psychologically poignant highly reflective of the perpetual anxiety amidst French society during wartime.

Both Auric and Apollinaire latch onto that poignancy. According to Auric, *Parade* seems to portray the melancholic truth of the circus. When read against the backdrop of the birth of the psychoanalysis in the 1890s, the ballet seems to work through the play of psychological associations within the multimedia whole. Apollinaire gives this play a new name. In the aforementioned program note, he observes that "from this new alliance – for up to now scenery and costumes on the one hand and choreography on the other had only a very superficial link—there emerges in *Parade* a kind of *sur-réalisme*."[84] The term "surrealism" that Apollinaire coins here after a careful discussion with his editor, also appears in conjunction with his own contemporary play, *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* (1917),[85] soon became the name of an important artistic movement that would have a long legacy.[86]

[84] Quoted in Harding, *Erik Satie*, 158.
[85] Aspley, "Apollinaire, Guillaume (1880-1918)," 35-6.
[86] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 197.

CHAPTER 3

UNDERSTANDING SURREALISM THROUGH PSYCHOANALYSIS

> *It is wonderful. The surrealists send me their newspaper daily with a wonderful dedication on the first page. I read it every day—but when I am finished with it—I have to admit—I do not find anything in the paper I really understand.*
>
> —Sigmund Freud

History

The historical connections between surrealism and psychoanalysis are unmistakable and well documented. As noted, Apollinaire introduced the word "surrealism" in 1917 and became, according to Wallace Fowlie, the "main god" among the first surrealists including André Breton (1896-1966), Paul Éluard (1895-1952), Louis Aragon (1897-1982), Benjamin Péret (1899-1959), and Philippe Soupault (1897-1990).[87] Influenced by Apollinaire, André Breton—a French poet and trained physician—established himself as a leader of surrealism and published the first *Manifeste du surréalisme* in 1924.[88] Before the first translation of Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis from German to French in 1921, Breton learned about it in 1916 through Dr. Emmanuel Régis's *Précis de psychiatrie* (1914) while working as an orderly in a military hospital.[89] Régis's summary gave the impression that psychoanalysis was a kind of self-help—a technique with no need for a doctor—inspiring Breton to develop and explore "automatic techniques," specifically automatic writing that was believed to reveal, as he called it, the "depths of the mind."[90] Although Breton and Freud, as Aaron H. Esman puts it, "suffered a

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[87] Wallace Fowlie, *Age of Surrealism* (New York: William Marrow Company, 1950), 22.
[88] André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972) as mentioned in Keith Aspley, *Historical Dictionary of Surrealism* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2010), 85.
[89] Jennifer Gibson, "Surrealism before Freud: Dynamic Psychiatry's 'Simple Recording Instrument," *Art Journal* 46, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 57.
[90] Quoted in Gibson, "Surrealism before Freud," 56-7. As stated in the original source, Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, 10., "The imagination is perhaps on the point of reasserting itself, of reclaiming its rights. If the depths

mutual incomprehension,"[91] their works nevertheless shares some similarities, including the possibility of cultivating a "somewhat utopian" melioristic worldview.[92] Although neither movement succeeded in such utopian goals,[93] studying Breton and his followers' attitudes still offers insight into the connections between different automatic techniques and the notion of the subconscious, an idea that would prove central to surrealism.

The conflict between Freud and Breton started with the poet having high expectations, but spiraled into disappointment. In October 1921, Breton traveled to Vienna for the sole purpose of interviewing Freud, who claimed to have "very little free time in these days."[94] According to Breton biographer Mark Polizzotti,

> Freud considered his visitor a poet rather than a scientist, and saw little relation between his research and the young Frenchman's literary interests. Breton, whose knowledge of the theory and practice of psychoanalysis was, in reality, superficial, had little to interest the Austrian. In addition, the two were clearly speaking at cross-purposes: Freud considered the practical techniques and raw materials of psychoanalysis the means to a therapeutic end, when for Breton their primary aim should be "the expulsion of man from himself."[95]

Breton could only get Freud to speak in "generalities," leaving him feeling, according to Polizzotti, the "spite of disappointment."[96] He was particularly disappointed in Freud's lack of interest in the "dreamers' associations," a set of dreams gathered from friends and prepared for publication.[97] Freud, for his part, was aware of how Breton's movement did not completely align with his vision. This is demonstrated in his response to Breton's invitation to contribute to the

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of our mind contain within it strange forces capable of augmenting those on the surface, or of waging a victorious battle against them, then, if need be, to submit them to the control of our reason."

[91] Aaron H. Esman, "Psychoanalysis and Surrealism: André Breton and Sigmud Freud," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 59, no. 1 (May 2011): 178.

[92] Esman, "Psychoanalysis and Surrealism," 180.

[93] Esman, "Psychoanalysis and Surrealism," 180.

[94] Quoted in Esman, "Psychoanalysis and Surrealism," 174.

[95] Quoted in Esman, "Psychoanalysis and Surrealism," 174.

[96] Quoted in Esman, "Psychoanalysis and Surrealism," 174.

[97] Esman, "Psychoanalysis and Surrealism," 175-6.

dream interpretation project: ". . . a mere collection of dreams without the dreamers' associations, without the knowledge of the circumstances in which they occurred, tells me nothing and I can hardly imagine what it could tell anyone."[98] At this point, Freud and Breton's misunderstandings left no possibilities for direct collaborations.[99]

Despite this lack of cooperation from Freud, psychoanalysis and surrealism nevertheless share goals. Among these is the possibility of therapeutic self-improvement, described by Esman as "a melioristic program that emphasized individual emotional growth over social revolution."[100] Surrealism was, like psychoanalysis, focused inward on cultivating a deeper understanding of the self. Yet broader social change remained a topic of interest in both fields. In psychoanalysis, this is evinced by books like Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents*.[101] For some surrealists, knowledge of the self was a first step toward broader change. Herbert Gershman explains as follows:

> Years before existentialism was known in France the surrealists had evolved an existential line of criticism: not only society but the author (or artist) too must be sufficient. An active *engagement* leading toward a radical transformation of society and its individual parts must be the goal of all who worked in ink, paint, or clay.[102]

Such a notion of the artist seeking "self-sufficiency" in order to affect broader change mirrors the goals of psychotherapy, in which self-understanding facilitates a healthier relationship between a patient and society.

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[98] Donald M. Kaplan, "Surrealism and Psychoanalysis: Notes on a Cultural Affair," *American Imago* 46, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 321.
[99] Kaplan, "Surrealism and Psychoanalysis," 322. Freud briefly showed an interest in surrealism after meeting Salvador Dalí (1904-1989), writing that "the young Spaniard, however, with his candid fanatical eyes and his undeniable technical mastery, has made me reconsider my opinion. It would in fact be very interesting to investigate analytically how a picture like this came to be painted." He nevertheless punctuated this brief reconsideration by opining that the surrealists showed "serious psychological problems." Kaplan, "Surrealism and Psychoanalysis," 321.
[100] Esman, "Psychoanalysis and Surrealism," 180.
[101] Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, ed. and trans. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005).
[102] Herbert S. Gershman, *The Surrealist Revolution in France* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1969), 18.

Given that surrealism took as its goal a combination of self-exploration and collective change, it is surprising that music—an art form similarly concerned with both inner feelings and more external questions of identity—figured only rarely in the movement's early manifestos and activities.[103] In fact, "surrealism in sound" seems to be the last aspect that surrealists like Breton wished to explore. Gershman wrote this:

> The painting is seen instantaneously, its composition and contours strike the viewer all at once, as a unit; the prose passage is sensed in time, colorless and formless to the eye. While music, too, has a temporal existence similar to that of prose, its substance, its picture of reality (or "sur-reality"), is so radically different from either of the other two arts as to warrant separate treatment. Even less than with painting or sculpture can the unstructured "meaning" of a piece of music be fixed in the lumbering syntax of a natural language–which, incidentally, may explain the surrealists' indifference to music.[104]

Although the surrealists were interested in the ephemeral experience of art, their theories relied on relatively fixed meaning based eccentrically on the linguistic relationship of syntax. This may be why Breton considered music "*la plus profondément confusionnelle*" of all artistic forms of expression.[105] Though the poet did not specify what about music was "deeply confusing" to him and his movement, it seems possible that its lack of representative meaning plays a role in his assessment.[106] This early exclusion has resulted in a lack of primary and secondary literature that discusses how music might fit within the broader surrealist movement. In the following chapter, I consider possible connections between the music in *Parade* and the surrealist movement by

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[103] Consideration are readily available of both music and the self and music and collective identity in relation to fin-de-siècle France. On the former, see Katherine Bergeron, *Voice Lessons: French Mélodie in the Belle Epoque* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). On the latter, see Jann Pasler, *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).
[104] Gershman, *The Surrealist Revolution in France*, 20.
[105] Gershman, *The Surrealist Revolution in France*, 28.
[106] Gershman, *The Surrealist Revolution in France*, 28. Gershman furthermore suggests a possible biographical explanation for Breton's bias against music as a surrealistic medium. In aesthetic debates, Satie sided with Tristan Tzara (1896-1963), a Romanian poet whose publication of *Sept manifestes dada* in 1924 countered the idea of subsuming Dada into Surrealism. Though Tzara later joined the surrealists in 1929, Breton's view toward music as a surrealistic medium remained the same. See Gershman, *The Surrealist Revolution in France*, 29. See also Keith Aspley, "Tzara, Tristan (1896-1964)," in *Historical Dictionary of Surrealism* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2010), 480-1.

taking on the work as a multimedia whole. To do so, I first need to review the tenets of surrealism put forth by Breton and others, especially their understanding of the subconscious and their ideas about self-exploration. Such a review provides a hermeneutic window into how different artistic media—especially music—may be interpreted through the lens of surrealism.

Tenets and Techniques

The contents of Breton's 1924 *Manifeste* are purposefully vague, inspiring numerous subsequent books that have attempted to analyze and clarify Breton's definitions. According to René Passeron, surrealists practice the act of abandoning consciousness, eschewing anything that "could hinder the 'automatic' spontaneous nature of thought."[107] This assessment is reflected in the following definition of surrealism by Breton:

> SURREALISM, n. Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express – be it verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner – the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.[108]

The surrealists, as Breton puts it, draw on the power of the psychological experiences of half-sleep. More specifically, Breton believes in "the future resolution of these two apparently contradictory states. The synthesis of dream and reality will form a new absolute reality, a super-reality, if you will."[109] The word "realism" or "reality" lent a connotation of "absolute sincerity," which became the preference of younger writers and critics. Yet, according to Wallace Fowlie, "the realistic creed had worn itself out tiresomely and monotonously."[110] Surrealist artists sought sincerity through analysis of the "subconscious." More specifically, the surrealists thought that the realists were mistakenly focused on the wrong human psychological phenomena. Fowlie

[107] René Passeron, *Surrealism* (Paris: Editions Pierre Terrail, 2001), 44.
[108] Quoted in Passeron, *Surrealism,* 44.
[109] Quoted in Passeron, *Surrealism,* 44.
[110] Fowlie, *Age of Surrealism,* 16.

explains:

> The need for sincerity in literary expression, felt strongly in France during the first twenty years of the century, is really the belief that the conscious states of man's being are not sufficient to explain him to himself and to others. His subconscious contains a larger and especially a more authentic or accurate part of his being. It was found that our conscious speech and our daily actions are usually in contradiction with our true selves and our deeper desires. The neat patterns of human behavior, set forth by the realists, and which our lives seem to follow, were found to be patterns formed by social forces rather than by our desires or temperaments or inner psychological selves. This discovery or conviction that we are more sincerely revealed in our dreams and in our purely instinctive actions than in our daily exterior habits of behavior (tea-drinking or cocktailing, etc.) is of course basic to surrealism.[111]

With the notion of the subconscious placed at the forefront of the movement, Breton invented a primary method of automatic writing that would reveal the subconscious mind through the act of jotting down all thoughts running through the mind without the interference of conscious or worldly reasoning.[112] This development of automatic writing was supposedly intended to mirror Freudian "free association."[113] Breton read, as a medical student, *La Psychanalyse des névroses et des psychoses* by Dr. Edward Régis and Angelo Hesnard, but "as the works of Freud gradually became available in French translations in the 1910s and 1920s, he would have more direct access to his theories."[114] Due to the unavailability of the original sources, Breton misunderstood Freud's original theory, and, despite the quarrels and disagreements expressed by Freud, the writer introduced this principle to justify his claim in the manifesto that he had found "a newly discovered inner reality."[115]

Surrealists were also concerned with the interpretation of dreams, another principle inspired directly by Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899). In Breton's words, "it is quite right

[111] Fowlie, *Age of Surrealism*, 16-7.
[112] Gibson, "Surrealism before Freud," 57.
[113] Gibson, "Surrealism before Freud," 56.
[114] Keith Aspley, "Psychoanalysis," 402.
[115] Gibson, "Surrealism before Freud," 56.

that Freud has analyzed dreams. It is inadmissible that this considerable part of our psychic activity should have received so little attention."[116] According to Keith Aspley, the surrealists "saw dreams as one of the most important ways of accessing the subconscious."[117] Painter André Masson (1896-1987) was the first to adapt the literary technique of automatic writing to another art form, as shown in Figure 4, *Furious Suns* (1925).

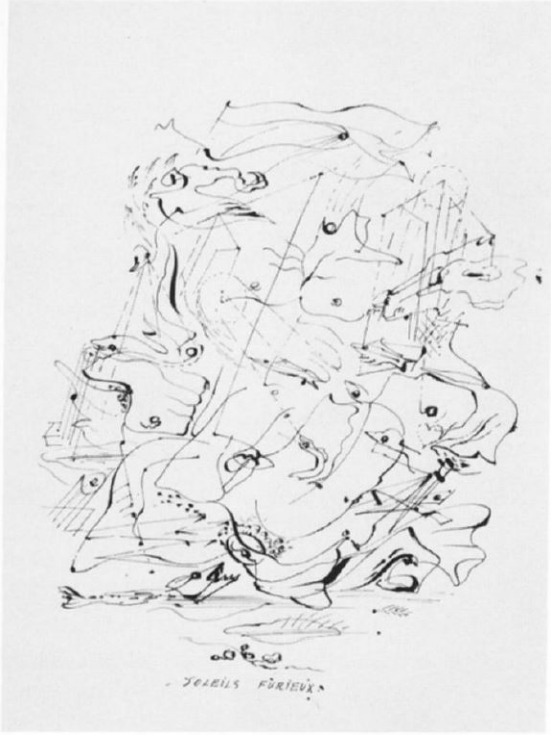

Figure 4: *Furious Suns* (1925), one of André Masson's drawings in the automatic manner. [118]

The drawing was done in the automatic style that "was a turning point away from Cubism towards a more personal style and expression."[119] According to Masson, this process of automatic drawing taps into the subconscious mind by "[proceeding] as rapidly as his hand can move so that the images emerge without conscious intervention."[120] His pioneering work led to

[116] Aspley, "Dreams," 168-70.
[117] Aspley, "Dreams," 168-70.
[118] Gibson, "Surrealism before Freud," 57.
[119] Gibson, "Surrealism before Freud," 56.
[120] Gibson, "Surrealism before Freud," 57.

the later development of different techniques and interpretations, including Dalí's "trompe-l'oeil," an optical illusion intended to represent dream sequences,[121] as well as the interpretation of cubist works like Picasso's.

The goal of these techniques for the surrealists was to create a forum for self exploration. On the use of automatic methods and artistic reconstructions of the dream, William Rubin proposes that "art would be a means of expression, an instrument of self-discovery, not an end to be savored."[122] Inspired by psychoanalysis, surrealism in the arts came closer to a form of psychotherapy, sharing an obsession with examining a sense of one's self. Some authors have posited a broader foundation for these connections. Fowlie, for example, places this comparison in the context of World War I, writing as follows:

> Behind this discovery or elevation of surrealist lies the denial or refusal of reality, and still farther behind that, likes a more permanent state of mind of modern man for which the French have an excellent word: *inquiétude*, which in its English translation of "restlessness" seems inadequate. The current explanation of this *inquiétude* is the fact that man in the 20th century is forced to live in a period of threatened warfare or literal wars of such increasing cosmic magnitude that his state of mind is anything but peaceful.[123]

If the aim of the surrealists was to befriend and untangle their "*inquiétude*," the overall movement, then, became an act of self-exploration as a means to cope and be at peace with their troubled psychiatric inclinations.[124] Ambitious goals emerged from such a troubled context. Considering the surrealists' tendency to embrace the subconscious and the automatic in their artwork, Shaun McNiff posits that they may have ultimately sought a "dissolution of separation between art and life."[125] Hence their criticism also "focused on the social context and its values";

[121] Gershman, *The Surrealist Revolution in France*, 19.
[122] Rubin, *Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage*, 64.
[123] Fowlie, *Age of Surrealism*, 17.
[124] Shaun McNiff, *Art as Medicine* (Boulder: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1992), 47-8.
[125] McNiff, *Art as Medicine*, 50.

to the surrealists "everyone had equal access to creation, and the artist became an exemplary or shamanic figure who enacted the 'holy madness' of the community."[126] McNiff, like Esman, recognizes that the surrealists adopted a melioristic attitude toward the role of art in society: mankind can elevate itself only with the help of the shamanic artistic figures who would assist others to achieve the state of "surreality." These surrealist artists took "risks and used surprises, shock, and dramatic provocation to establish bonds with others."[127] The violent context of World War I, coupled with the tenets and techniques of the surrealists, justifies a psychologically-inspired approach to analyzing a multimedia work like *Parade*. The next chapter reconsiders the ballet—especially Satie's score—in light of these goals.

[126] McNiff, *Art as Medicine*, 50.
[127] McNiff, *Art as Medicine*, 51.

CHAPTER 4

SURREALISM IN THE MUSIC OF *PARADE*

The elements of *Parade* cannot be interpreted separately. This is where prior attempts at understanding surrealism in music have fallen short. Even though composers such as Pierre Boulez, Germaine Tailleferre, and Edgard Varèse created works inspired by surrealist poetry and imagery,[128] music scholars have not tried to understand surrealism by examining it as part of a multimedia whole and, therefore, have struggled to come to a consensus on what might constitute surrealist music. In order to analyze the surrealistic elements in this ballet, it is helpful to consider first some of the literature on surrealist poetry and painting to derive systematic ways of analyzing and interpreting *Parade*.[129]

Models from Visual Arts

The first surrealistic method, shared by all the media in *Parade*, is trompe-l'oeil or "deceiving the eye." According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art Terms*, trompe-l'oeil is used to describe pictures "in which a deliberate visual illusion is intended by the artist."[130] This technique in painting was not unique to the surrealist movement. Trompe-l'oeil illusions were described by Pliny the Elder of ancient Rome. In a public competition between painters, Zeuxis, who lived and worked in the fifth century B.C., deceived birds into pecking painted grapes. However, the winner of the competition was Parrhasios, who then tricked Zeuxis into trying to

[128] Pierre Boulez composed a song-cycle, *Le Marteau sans maître*, based on a set of surrealist poems by René Char, while Germaine Tailleferre composed the opera *La Petite Sirène* based on the scenario by a surrealist writer, Philippe Soupault. On the other hand, Edgard Varèse composed an orchestral piece, *Arcana*, taking the inspiration directly from his own dream.
[129] My analysis takes inspiration form Yves Duplessis's *Surrealism*, which attempts to categorize the various techniques used by the movement. He singles out humor, the marvelous, the dream, madness, surrealist objects, the exquisite corpse, and automatic writing. I have opted to pursue different categories while maintaining his interdisciplinary approach.
[130] Michael Clarke. "trompe-l'oeil," in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art Terms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 250.

lift a realistically painted drape. A more well-known story dates to the sixteenth century, when Renaissance artist and writer Giorgio Vasari conveyed the story of Giotto (ca. 1267-1337) tricking his master, Cimabue, into sweeping away a realistically painted fly on his painting.[131] In most cases, trompe-l'oeil relies on playing with perspective and dimensionality to create an illusion of realism. Surrealist painters adopted such skillful illusions to create a dreamlike atmosphere. The most famous examples are Dalí's well-known paintings, as well as Giorgio de Chirico's (1888-1978) reproductions of dream sequences, as shown in Figure 5 and 6.[132] Their goal was to engage the subconscious. Based on the premise that dreaming is the vessel of the subconscious, trompe-l'oeil allows these artists to present and interpret their dreams consciously through painting.

Figure 5: Girogio de Chirico's *Mystery and Melancholy of a Street* (1914). The painting suggests with the manipulations of shadow and sunlight a rising slope, although the building on the left may also imply a contradictory perspective of a receding street view.

[131] Michael Clarke, "trompe-l'oeil."
[132] Gershman, *The Surrealist Revolution in France*, 19.

Figure 6: Giorgio de Chirico's *Il viaggio angoscioso* (1918). Abandoning visual logic, the painting suggests a hallway receding into the background, disrupted by the arching doors on the far sides of the painting leading out into an empty plane of a starkly lit landscape.

The second artistic tool that helps us analyze the ballet—automatic drawing—recalls Breton's automatic writing.[133] In February or March 1924, Breton came across André Masson's exhibition at the Galerie Simon. It was there that Breton found and purchased what he considered the first "Surrealist painting" (Figure 7).[134] Although the painting was not done in the automatic style, it reflected "hermetic themes that preoccupied Masson at the time."[135] Soon after, Breton went to Masson's studio; by then he had already completed several drawings in the automatic style. Masson described his main principle as follows:

> To make the bodies unite with an environment in order to create a space where as much as possible following the hermetic definition, there is no longer either a top or a bottom—where that which is inside is also outside . . . The secret is the penetration of diverse elements.[136]

Masson's automatic drawing does not have one focus; instead, the line runs furiously across the

[133] Gibson, "Surrealism before Freud," 57.
[134] Gibson, "Surrealism before Freud," 56.
[135] Gibson, "Surrealism before Freud," 56.
[136] Quoted in Gibson, "Surrealism before Freud," 57.

whole sheet as if "guide[d] by an unknown internal urge."[137] Figure 4, an example of Masson's automatic drawings from the period, shows a work that the painter claims to be a "letter to himself" requiring "no aesthetic preparation, purpose, or research."[138] Without conscious intervention, Masson was able to draw a picture that reveals his "interior being."[139] Similarly, Picasso once stated, "A picture comes to me from miles away—and yet the next day I can't see what I've done myself."[140] For the surrealists, paintings and drawings in this automatic style reveal the creators' subconscious, specifically the *inquietude*, the inner turbulence. These artists, taking up the cause of self-exploration, thus achieve the goal of communicating their inner reality in a way that would somehow "elevate" the audience.

Figure 7: André Masson's *Les Quatre éléments* (1923-1924).

[137] Gibson, "Surrealism before Freud," 57.
[138] Gibson, "Surrealism before Freud," 57.
[139] Gibson, "Surrealism before Freud," 57.
[140] Fowlie, *Age of Surrealism*, 164-5.

The third visual art technique that helps analyze *Parade* is collage, which permeates the ballet, and is essential to the process of interpreting the role of music within it. *The Oxford Companion to Western Art* defines the technique as follows:

> Collage (French: sticking or pasting). The term has come to be used of any work made up of pieces of paper or other materials which have been painted, drawn, or printed and which are then stuck onto a support."[141]

More specifically, for the surrealists, collage is also a technique that translates their dreams. They turned to "ready-made" materials such as photographs and engravings that would not require "pencil or paints" to create a piece of art.[142] The effect of such arts gives the same result as when "a poem springs from the juxtaposition of newspaper headlines."[143] Such a poem reveals suppressed psychological concerns of everyday life, partly because of the newspaper's self-contained and preexisting connotations and meanings, which are in some ways "ready-made." In *Parade,* Picasso continued his experiment with collage technique that had been developed a decade prior, much earlier than the first surrealist manifesto of 1924. Working with fellow cubist Georges Braque, Picasso cultivated a sophisticated style that went through several stages of development. For surrealists generally, and for Picasso's work on *Parade* more specifically, collage technique and trompe-l'oeil were often used in conjunction with one another. According to Christine Poggi, Picasso's cubist collages often refer to the idea of trompe-l'oeil. Picasso, specifically, was using "painted frames" that are "curiously similar to his collage elements—newspaper clippings, playing cards, wallpaper fragments, parts of musical scores—in that both frames and collage elements are familiar, everyday objects that are normally excluded from the

[141] Hugh Brigstocke. "Collage," in *The Oxford Companion to Western Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
[142] Duplessis, *Surrealism*, 87.
[143] Duplessis, *Surrealism*, 87.

field of pictorial illusion" (Figure 8).[144] The idea of a visible frame on the actual canvas led Picasso to another step in his development of collage, which was seemingly inspired by an older principle. Poggi explains this in relation to *The Chess Pieces* (1911):

> As curtain loop and tassel, the rope refers to the Renaissance model of painting, in which the canvas is seemingly transformed into a transparent or open window. The curtain loop also suggests the traditional *repoussoir*, a framing element that creates the illusion of depth by appearing to lie in the forward plane of the canvas, so that other objects may appear pushed back behind it.[145]

The objects that Picasso utilizes as signifiers for a frame such as the curtain loop, tassel, and rope are distorted, imitating the effect of a view through layers of transparent glass.[146] His work therefore has the disorienting effect of having three-dimensional perspective cues while clearly appearing to be clearly in two dimensions.

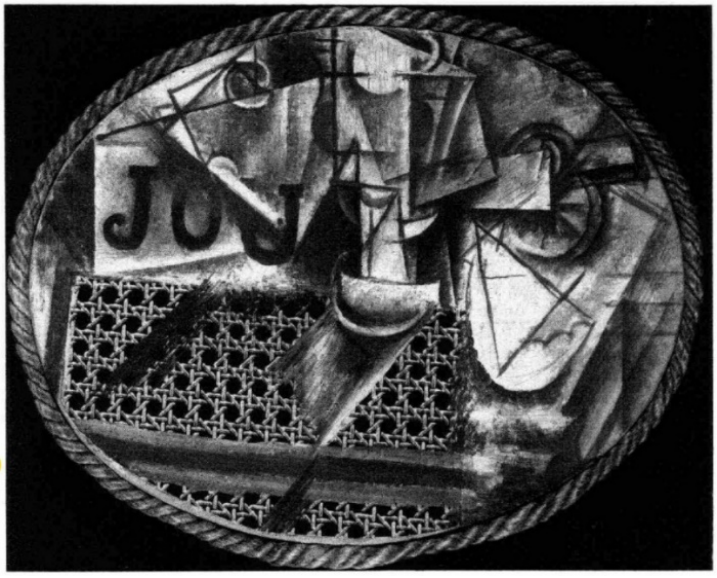

Figure 8: Pablo Picasso's *Still Life with Chair-Caning*, spring 1912, oil and oilcloth stuck on oval canvas, framed with rope. A two-dimensional collage portrays everyday objects using a built-in frame as part of the painting.

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[144] Christine Poggi, "Frames of Reference: 'Table' and 'Tableau' in Picasso's Collages and Constructions," *Art Journal* 47, no. 4 (Winter 1988): 313.
[145] Poggi, "Frames of Reference," 313. According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art Terms*, repoussoir refers to "An object, motif, or figure placed in the right or left foreground of a picture to act as a framing element which leads the spectator's eye back into the composition. The landscapes of Claude Lorrain (1604/5-1682), for example, often have framing trees to left and right acting as repoussoirs." Michael Clarke. "repoussoir," in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art Terms*.
[146] Poggi, "Frames of Reference," 313-4.

Picasso, however, did not just create these illusions in two dimensions. Some of his cubist collages play with the idea of representing an object that creates a three-dimensional illusion by breaking through a literal frame. Poggi explains: "the status of these objects arises only in the absence of this frame, with the merger of pictorial, stagelike, and real-life space that existed in the original studio setting."[147] On a wooden pad, Picasso manipulates the use of space by placing the object of focus loosely in the middle of the painting. As shown in Figure 9, Picasso's collage has developed into an illusory three-dimensional art to reach out toward the viewer, and therefore acts analogously to when a performer enters the audience during a staged show or circus.

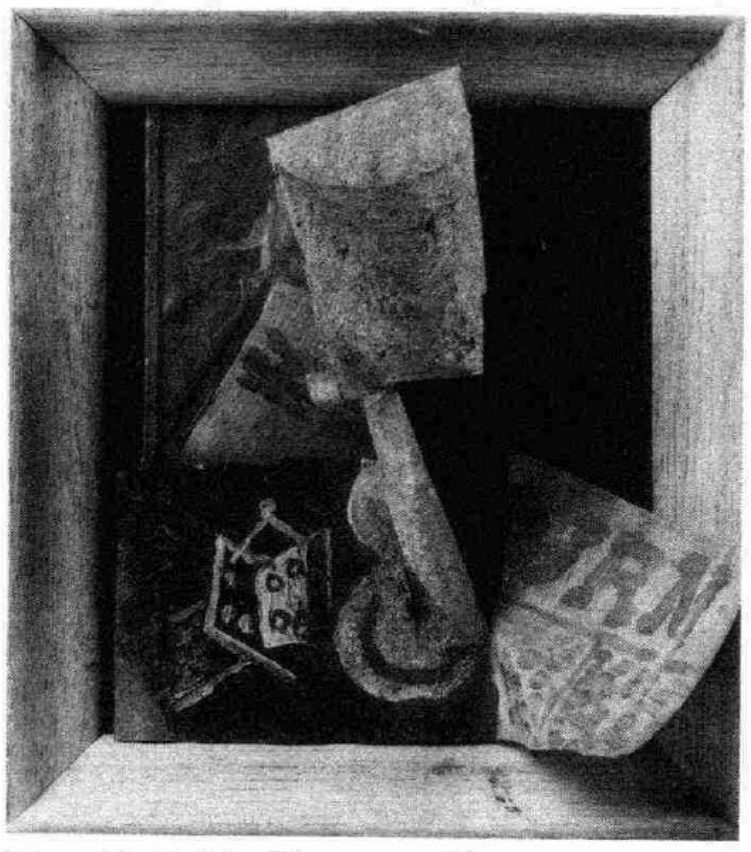


Figure 9: Pablo Picasso's *Glass Die, and Newspaper*, spring 1914, construction: painted wood and tin. The artwork is in a three-dimensional collage style, loosely constructed with a wooden frame representing the audience's perspective towards the ongoing spectacle of, perhaps, a live staging.

[147] Poggi, "Frames of Reference," 318.

Lastly, a later method cultivated by Salvador Dalí in the1930s, paranoiac-criticism plays a significant role in how *Parade* can be interpreted surrealistically. The paranoiac-critical method is defined as "a delusional psychosis in which the delusions develop slowly into a complex, intricate and logically elaborated system, without hallucination and without general personality disorganization."[148] In other words, this method involves a "basic 'obsessive' idea and a relatively simple implementation."[149] Dalí first developed the idea in 1927 in Cadaquès where he realized that his neighbor was strangely obsessed with literature. This neighbor—the wife of the fisherman—wholeheartedly believed that author Eugenio d'Ors was writing about her in his books and bombarding her with love letters.[150] Within such strange interpretative delirium lies the "fusion of reality and the imaginary,"[151] the very basis of the blurred or merged boundary of the surrealists. Breton himself writes that paranoia-criticism is a "first class instrument" that helps reveal the subconscious.[152] In his *Vie Secrète*, Dalí wrote:

> At dawn I woke up, and without washing or dressing, I would sit in front of the easel placed in my bedroom, opposite my bed. The first image of the morning was my canvas, which would also be the last thing I saw before going to bed. I tried to go to sleep staring at it in order to keep the drawing during my sleep, and sometimes in the middle of the night I would rise to look at it for a moment in the moonlight. Or, between two naps, I starred at my canvas like a medium trying to bring elements out of my own imagination. When the images were precisely placed in the painting, I painted them immediately. But sometimes I would have to wait for hours, passive, the paintbrush immobile in my hand, before seeing anything suddenly appearing.[153]

As much as such a procedure displays paranoia and the state of nervousness of an individual whose "passion for perfection, capricious narcissism and 'divergent' intelligence made for

[148] Haim Finkelstein, "Dalí's Paranoia-Criticism or The Exercise of Freedom," *Twentieth Century Literature* 21, no. 1 (Feb 1975): 60.
[149] Finkelstein, "Dalí's Paranoia-Criticism," 66.
[150] Passeron, *Surrealism,* 95.
[151] Passeron, *Surrealism,* 95.
[152] Quoted in Passeron, *Surrealism,* 95.
[153] Quoted in Passeron, *Surrealism,* 98.

dilettante effervescence," Dalí's aim was to paint the "inner model" with absolute precision.[154]

Dalí's paranoiac vision, regarded as his "*tour de force*," is, in one way, a painting strategy, but in another, a forum for self-exploration, especially as a form of artistic reception.[155] The interpretative side of the paranoiac-critical method allows for multiple artistic interpretations of the work of others. More specifically, this interpretative approach creates the idea of double image that allows "two alternate readings of a same apparent motif."[156] Such was the case with Dalí's neighbor: she crafted and believed an interpretation that runs counter to the original author's intentions. The double image, also present in Dalí's own views of his paintings, may become triple or quadruple depending solely on the "paranoiac function of each individual."[157] The example of such interpretative approach is seen in Dalí's obsession with the hidden sexual content of Jean-François Millet's *Angelus* (1857-1859), which originally portrays a man and a woman reciting the Angelus in the midst of the working field (Figure 10). However, Dalí's translations of this work linger mostly in the realm of sexual repression as seen in Figure 11 and 12. Such seemingly absurd reinterpretations—connecting psychological *inquiétudes* to visual arts motifs—have echoes in *Parade*, where they act as an illusory pathway that reveals the individual's desires, fears, and repressed thoughts.

[154] Passeron, *Surrealism*, 98.
[155] Finkelstein, "Dalí's Paranoia-Criticism," 66.
[156] Gérard Durozoi, *History of the Surrealist Movement*, trans. Alison Anderson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 214.
[157] Durozoi, *History of the Surrealist Movement*, 214.

Figure 10: Jean-François Millet's *L'Angélus* (1857-9), a realistic paining of two peasants working in the fields; they appear to be praying, perhaps upon hearing the church bell in the distance.

Figure 11: Salvador Dalí's *Archeological Reminiscence of Millet's Angelus* (1934). The eerie atmosphere of the painting suggests a psychological preoccupation of Dalí's obsession with sexual oppression.

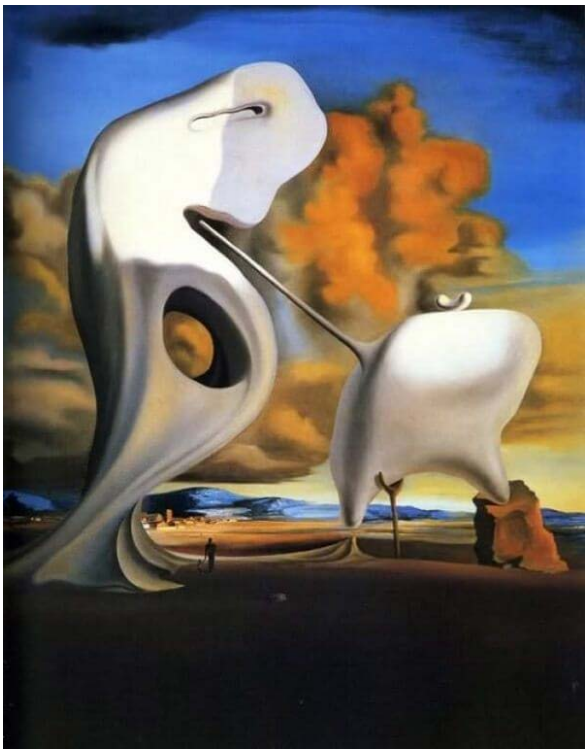


Figure 12: Salvador Dalí's *Millet's Architectonic Angelus* (1933). While the composition of the original painting by Millet remains, the threat from the perilous sphere-like object is highly distinguishable implying the hidden danger, in this particular case, of a sexual desire.

The Emergence of the Subconscious: Contextualizing Satie's Score

The paradox at the heart of *Parade* lies in its ability to make its audience lose any sense of interior and the exterior. Cocteau describes this as "the confusion in the minds of the audience between the foretaste and the feast-to-come, between the sideshow and the main event, between the exterior spectacle and the interior one."[158] This sentiment is reflected in a text that Cocteau designed on a card to be flashed before the spectators on the stage just before the final curtain:

The drama
which
didn't
take place
for those people
who stayed outside
was

[158] Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian*, 473.

by
Jean Cocteau Erik Satie Pablo Picasso[159]

Satie's music participates in the blurring of the interior and exterior. Whiting hears in the score an "interiorized" musical style that "accord[s] with the glimpse of the stage interior," opposed at times with "the musical style [that] becomes more extroverted and popular"[160] or the "exteriorized" musical activities. Taken in conjunction with the work of the other collaborators, this dichotomy in Satie's score aims toward the surrealist goal of subconscious self-exploration. Through principles borrowed from the surrealist visual arts, the music of *Parade* can be interpreted as reinforcing an illusory mirroring effect, double image, acoustical illusion, and mosaic-like sequence that reinforces dream-like experiences.

The opening music in *Parade* is a majestic chorale. Alan M. Gillmor suggests that, though it appears as a comical entertainment on the surface, the ballet is filled with melancholy and anxiety from the very beginning. The instrumentation of low brass, low woodwinds, and low string create a dark tone, especially when coupled with its dissonant harmonization.[161] Gillmor proposes that such a mood emerges not from the work of Cocteau and the other collaborators, but specifically from Satie's score, which creates "the air of pessimism and bitterness . . . Its melodic banality and rhythmic rigidity, its wistful ragtime, its rude explosion of brass and harsh bitonal harmonies capture to perfection the metaphysic of the circus and the poetry of the streets."[162] Gillmor's description of the music suggests an important connection between Satie's score and surrealism. Rather than portraying the "reality" of the contemporary entertainment businesses, Satie seems to embark on a different path, representing instead a mood that feels at

[159] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 199.
[160] Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian*, 474.
[161] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 200-1.
[162] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 200. Gillmor specifically seeks to counter a suggestion made by Richard Axsom that the mood of the piece is established in Cocteau's scenario.

odds with the world of popular culture. Listening to this opening reveals that *Parade* is not just about a divide between high and low culture. Rather, the ballet is burdened from the beginning with heavier psychological associations through its eerie timbre, reflecting, perhaps, the preoccupied fears of a war-torn society as well as the turbulence in the individual psyche.

The surreal elements in Satie's score, however, extend well beyond just creating an introspective mood. In some instances, his music is a direct response to the ideas of his collaborators. His *Prélude du Rideau rouge*, for example, needs to be understood alongside Picasso's "curtain" for the performance, as it engages in the same processes of trompe-l'oeil and framing. As we have seen, the surrealists used trompe-l'oeil as a tool for engaging the subconscious. Drawing on this associative use of representation, Picasso developed the idea of a "frame," using trompe l'oeil techniques to help distinguish between the outer and inner worlds, between the conscious and subconscious respectively. Often, his works became a painted frame within a frame, an illusory space within a studio, a painted wallpaper on top of the wallpaper where the painting is hung, and lastly, in the case of *Parade*, a stage on a stage. Figure 3 shows Picasso's *Rideau rouge*, his largest canvas for the project, added nearly at the last minute.[163] Because of this adjustment, Satie composed his *Prélude du Rideau rouge*, placing it right after the opening chorale when Picasso's curtain drops and appears majestically in front of the audience. The very idea of lowering a curtain at the start of the performance is, in itself, unusual. The illusory painting suggests numerous forms of reversal, not just the inner opposing the outer, but also the reversal of the front and backstage. Rothschild interprets these reversals, suggesting that, with the framing curtains,

> the viewer is a backstage participant in what is presumably an outdoor theatre with the pulled curtains visible in the background opening on to a green meadow. When seen in its

[163] Davis, *Classic Chic*, 119.

> entirety, however, these curtains appear to exist in both the front and rear of the spectator in relation to the depicted figures.[164]

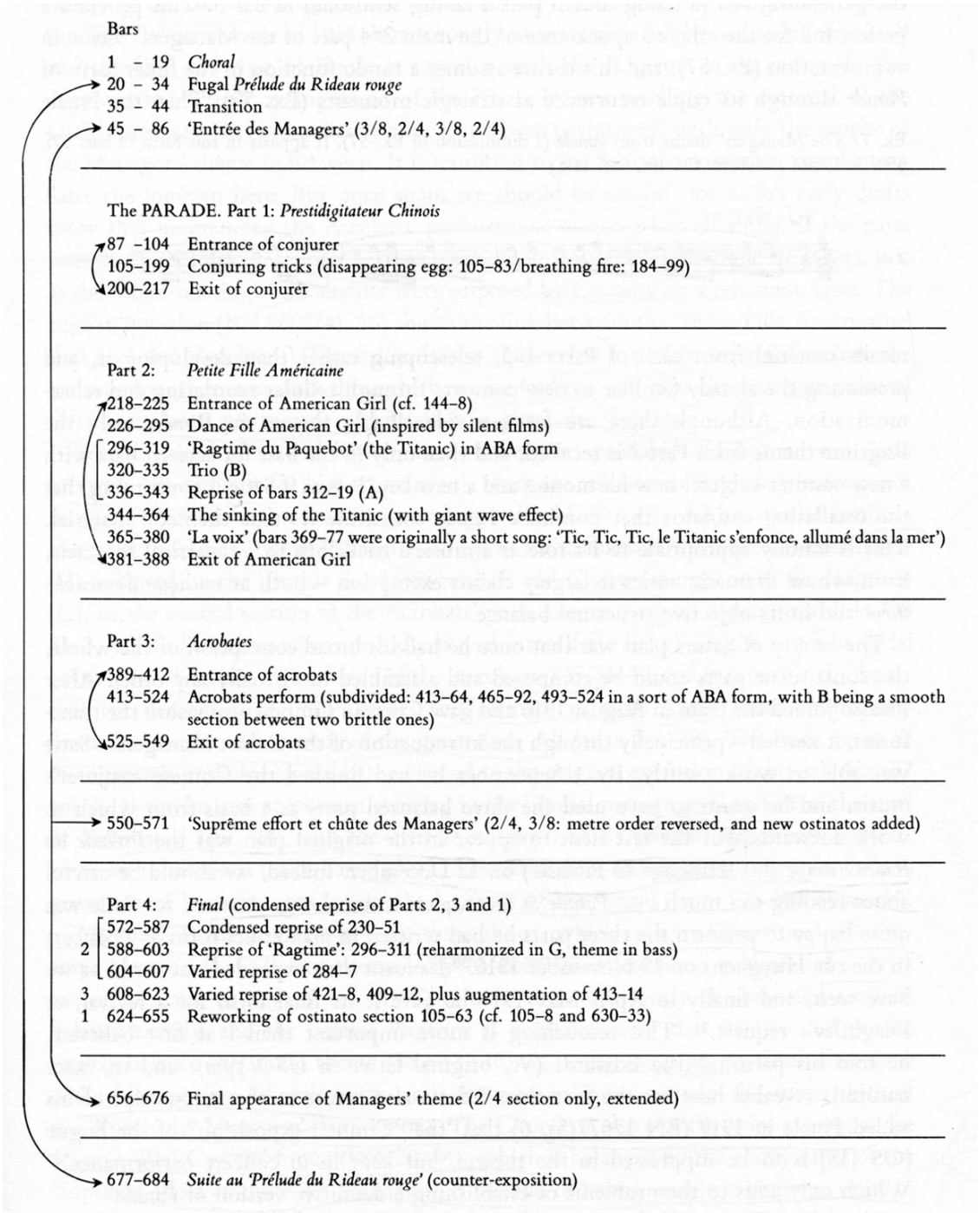
The curtain itself serves to disorient the audience and complicate any sense of "reality" conveyed by the ballet. Satie's docile and "muted" *Prélude* is similarly disorienting, following the opening choral in a different style: a quiet fugue at first, before turning suddenly more extroverted. Satie himself describes it as "very restrained and solemn, and even rather dry, but short . . . slightly banal, falsely naïve—blah, in fact."[165] It is meant to be a frame. After the last tableau with the acrobats, the *Prélude* reappears in an abbreviated form as the curtain descends, "framing" the ephemerality of the whole ballet in music, much like a surrealist picture that incorporates an illusory frame, and thereby setting the time frame as a duration to be filled with more introspective materials.

The recapitulation of the *Prélude*, however, is not the only musical frame. The entire ballet is constructed as a palindrome. In this sense, the greatest illusion of all in *Parade* lies in the organization of the musical score in the form of a "reflection" or "mirrored effect." In 1942, Wilfred Mellers was the first to point out the relationship between the different *tableaux* in *Parade*, as seen in Figure 13.[166] Satie creates a "symmetrical" form in which "each single movement, and the sequence of movements that make up the whole, is built on a mirror structure that gives the work its remote and objective self-sufficiency."[167] In other words, *Parade*, within its frame, became a "self-sufficient" piece of an art work, which has the illusory quality of the "inner" and "outer" selves. Gillmor explains:

> Like the grand illusion of the circus world itself, *Parade* is an elegant structure of mirrors within mirrors. Not only is the ballet framed by the music of the "Prélude du Rideau rouge" and the Manager's theme, which functions like a frame within a frame, each of

[164] Rothschild, *Picasso's Parade*, 209.
[165] Davis, *Classic Chic*, 119.
[166] Robert Orledge, *Satie the Composer* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 173.
[167] Orledge, *Satie the Composer*, 172.

the central episode—the "Prestidigitateur Chinois," the "Petite fille Américaine," the "Acrobates"—is itself a mirror form, a series of ternary structures whose recapitulations reflect the opening episodes, in reverse order.[168]



	Bars	
	1 – 19	*Choral*
→	20 – 34	Fugal *Prélude du Rideau rouge*
	35 – 44	Transition
→	45 – 86	'Entrée des Managers' (3/8, 2/4, 3/8, 2/4)
		The PARADE. Part 1: *Prestidigitateur Chinois*
↓	87 –104	Entrance of conjurer
	105–199	Conjuring tricks (disappearing egg: 105–83/breathing fire: 184–99)
↓	200–217	Exit of conjurer
		Part 2: *Petite Fille Américaine*
↓	218–225	Entrance of American Girl (cf. 144–8)
	226–295	Dance of American Girl (inspired by silent films)
⌈	296–319	'Ragtime du Paquebot' (the Titanic) in ABA form
	320–335	Trio (B)
⌊	336–343	Reprise of bars 312–19 (A)
	344–364	The sinking of the Titanic (with giant wave effect)
	365–380	'La voix' (bars 369–77 were originally a short song: 'Tic, Tic, Tic, le Titanic s'enfonce, allumé dans la mer')
↓	381–388	Exit of American Girl
		Part 3: *Acrobates*
↓	389–412	Entrance of acrobats
	413–524	Acrobats perform (subdivided: 413–64, 465–92, 493–524 in a sort of ABA form, with B being a smooth section between two brittle ones)
↓	525–549	Exit of acrobats
→	550–571	'Suprême effort et chûte des Managers' (2/4, 3/8: metre order reversed, and new ostinatos added)
		Part 4: *Final* (condensed reprise of Parts 2, 3 and 1)
⌈	572–587	Condensed reprise of 230–51
2	588–603	Reprise of 'Ragtime': 296–311 (reharmonized in G, theme in bass)
⌊	604–607	Varied reprise of 284–7
3	608–623	Varied reprise of 421–8, 409–12, plus augmentation of 413–14
1	624–655	Reworking of ostinato section 105–63 (cf. 105–8 and 630–33)
→	656–676	Final appearance of Managers' theme (2/4 section only, extended)
→	677–684	*Suite au 'Prélude du Rideau rouge'* (counter-exposition)

Figure 13: Milfrid Mellers' observation of the formal reflections in *Parade* suggests a complex palindromic structure within and between the ballet's tableaux.

[168] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 207.

This idea of mirrors within mirrors recalls an infinity mirror effect where reflective surfaces of the same size are placed in parallel to each other, creating countless spaces in between that represent the same image throughout. The palindromic structure of Satie's music produces a similar effect, generating a kind of auditory déja vu. It adds, moreover, to the disorienting blending of interior and exterior, creating a dream-like atmosphere. Mellers considers this atmosphere, observing that, in the context of *Parade*, "the human beings are the circus performers, but what they do, or are made to do, bears only an illusory relationship to the dreams by which they live, which would seem to be dreams within a dream."[169] Mellers thus introduces an abstract interpretation of the ballet by suggesting that our reality bears only an "illusory relationship" to dreams, which may refer to the emergence of the subconscious in a way that feels "out-of-touch." Satie's score, especially its symmetrical, mirrored structure—evokes such an experience through its use of a straightforward but difficult to hear form of organization.

The next sonic illusion is the collage, which is achieved in conjunction with automatism. Cocteau proposed to Satie the idea of an "acoustical illusion" which could be pursued "with the same object as the 'eye-deceivers'—newspapers, cornices, imitation wood-work, which the painters use."[170] Trompe-l'oeil works as a kind of deceptive sensory stimulus, specifically for the visual art elements of a live staging. In *Parade*, Cocteau extends the notion of visual illusion to another artistic dimension, the realm of the sonic perception, where the poet introduces the use of "realistic sound effects" to create the aural illusion or *trompe-l'oreille*.[171] Satie was, at first, highly reluctant to include any of Cocteau's proposed sound effects in his score. He compromised. While some of the requests were too wild—for instance, Cocteau suggested

[169] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 207.
[170] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 200.
[171] Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian*, 484.

having a dancer yell from the stage[172]—most of the proposed ideas ended up in the live performance. In his "Notes for the sound effect of 'Parade,'" Satie lists all of the objects he ended up using, including woodblock, revolver shots, a shrill siren and a dee siren, a typewriter, a lottery wheel, and "squishy puddles."[173] The aforementioned objects create an "aural collage," or "the juxtaposition of common elements that are forced into uncommon relationships and perspectives [that] give rise to a confusion of connotative meanings."[174] Due to their ready-made and indexical qualities, the sounds of the "everyday objects" connect to surrealist ideas about automatism.[175] They present a kind of aural collage, in which some sounds denote "danger" like the gunshot and siren, while others like the typewriter can signify intense anxiety, or perhaps a feeling of being out of place. Axsom suggests that relentless anxiety and pessimism were embedded in the deeper layers of the multimedia whole as they worked alongside this sonic collage on the subconscious.[176]

More generally, the aesthetic of the "ready-made" object of the collage permeates Satie's work. The segments of *Parade* can be seen as interchangeable. According to Cocteau,

> The piano duet score of *Parade* is a marvel of architecture, from one end to the other—something that escapes ears used to vagueness and to *frisson*. A fugue waddles forth and gives birth to the very rhythm of the sadness of fairs [the entry of the managers]. Then come the three dances. Their numerous motifs, each distinct from others, like objects, ensue without development or entanglement. A metronomic unity presides overreach of the numbers, which superimpose the simple silhouette of each role with the reveries that it elicits.[177]

When a musical unit is treated as a "ready-made" object, the score of the ballet becomes a

[172] Massine, *My Life in Ballet*, 102.
[173] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 200.
[174] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 199-200.
[175] As discussed in Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 200, the production of *Parade* was also the first "large-scale application" of Luigi Russolo's celebrated futurist manifesto, "Art of Noises." Gillmor suggests that *Parade* may have some identifiable connections to the Futurist group, who admired the "noise spectaculars," and the decision to introduce noise elements into this ballet production.
[176] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 200.
[177] Quoted in Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian*, 475.

mosaic-like collage.[178] Similarly, according to Gillmor, the opening scene of *Parade* emphasizes the "stark juxtaposition" achievable from "shifting blocks of sound wherein momentum is maintained primarily through a process of metric displacement."[179] Each block consists of only one melodic cell, "strongly rooted on a tonal plane by means of an unvarying ostinato figure."[180] The result is a fragmented whole that, perhaps, encourages a kind of fragmented, discontinuous interpretation of the ballet. Satie's musical collage was perfect as a vehicle for an avant-garde production permeated with the creation of an otherworldly, "surreal" experience.

The last sonic illusory technique found in *Parade* lies within the idea of stylistic allusion, an indirect reference to passing musical styles. Parallel to Dalí's paranoiac-critical method, the score of *Parade* creates opportunities for self-exploration by juxtaposing and thus reinterpreting genres and styles. Such a blurring of musical stylistic boundaries in turn aids in the multidisciplinary effect of blurring the boundary between dream and reality. Withing observes:

> Stylistic allusions likewise stand out from the subdued ostinato patterns that surround them: the circus-band fanfare that accompanies the entrance and exit of the Chinese conjurer, the snippet of bitonal cakewalk at the beginning of the American girls dance, the disjointed waltz that accompanies the acrobats' stunts. Even the ostinato patterns occasionally emerge from the background to take on a distinct expressive value. The Managers' theme, for example, aptly renders their redundant chatter; it wheels in continual circles, usually at cross-purposes with the harmony and metre of the accompaniment, changing only in intensity, never in substance.[181]

Satie's score exhibits multiple occurrences of artistic decisions that are capable of rendering two or more possible stylistic interpretations. Much like Dalí's "double image," the interpretative biases would emerge through the audience's psychological obsessions, preoccupations, and more generally, pessimism as reflected in their *inquiétudes*. Coming to terms with what they are

[178] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 200.
[179] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 202.
[180] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 202.
[181] Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian*, 479.

hearing consciously thus aids in the exploration of a subconscious higher reality.

The Little American Girl tableau lends a specific insight into how the double image effect could occur in music and sound. Whiting argues that the stylistic allusion occurs in the central episode of the act, "*Rag-time du paquebot*," which Satie quotes directly from "The Mysterious Rag" by Irving Berlin (1888-1989).[182] The changes that Satie makes to this original composition include the inversion of the melodic contour. Berlin's pattern of eight-bar phrasing in the chorus (A^8 B^8 A'^8) becomes an uneven A^{10} B^6 A'^8. The ninth and tenth measures of Satie's strain are inserted as an inspired afterthought resulting in irregular phrasing. Satie adds decorative chromatic glissandi following the refrain in mm. 13-14, which otherwise remains diatonic. The last alteration is in the modification of Berlin's harmonic scheme, subtly done with a quickening of the pace: Berlin's chorus stays in the tonic for five and a half measures then reaches E major (V/vi) in mm. 9. Satie simply arranges the secondary dominant chord of E major to arrive earlier in mm. 4.[183] These subtle yet noticeable changes in this quotation lead to possibilities of conflicting interpretations. Whiting claims that such subtle changes in the Little American Girl scene, coupled with the "absence" of Satie's characteristic bitonal mystification in the central section of the score marks, "so to speak, . . . an American-style popular song for an American-style girl."[184] Other scholars have noted the psychological implications of Satie's stylistic choices in this context. Gillmor, for example, points out that the "Steamboat Ragtime" slowly but subtly condemns "our heroine to near disaster as the ship sinks in a swirl of strings and winds preceded by mournful blasts of its foghorn."[185] At the end of the tableau the Little American Girl "is stranded on a beach where we see her (according to Massine) building sand castles, her

[182] Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian*, 476-9.
[183] Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian*, 479.
[184] Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian*, 479.
[185] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 205.

isolation symbolized by a theme sounding high flutes and piccolo, her childlike demeanor reflected by the ineffably sweet ostinato sounding softly below in harp and strings."[186] To Gillmor, the classical stylistic elements in *Petite fille Américaine* hint at psychological preoccupations with loneliness and isolation coupled with the act of escaping and seeking emotional comfort through the recollection of childhood experiences, a natural of coping mechanism for a highly troubled mind. Such double images in *Parade* provide a means for the audience to explore and resolve their conflicting inner and outer psychiatric states with rather shocking realizations instigating, to varying extents, serious considerations about the nature of the self.

[186] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 206.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION: SATIE, SURREALISM IN SOUND, AND SELF-EXPLORATION

My reading of *Parade* stands at odds with many current views of the composer, raising the possibility that Satie's music has been misunderstood. Characterized by its humorous and lighthearted nature, his satirical style and eccentric personality continue to amuse audiences. The simplicity of his compositions together with the parodical contents of his works still dominate interpretations of his music. Such overgeneralizations about Satie's music can be harmful when one looks at how his style fits within broader artistic trends of the time. This thesis has argued instead that Satie's music aligns more readily with the techniques and goals of the surrealist movement.

More generally, I have developed a new model for understanding how surrealism might work in music, recognizing that surrealist music cannot be reduced to a list of concrete musical traits. Instead, surrealist music must be interpreted within the context of a multimedia whole, making the definition more versatile and applicable to specific circumstances. My thesis not only recognizes *Parade* as a work crucial to the historical foundations of surrealism, but demonstrates that music and sound were crucial to its impact in ways that align with the techniques and goals of other branches of the surrealist movement.

One concept bridges the surrealist arts, including music: the creators of such works aligned their ambitions and techniques with the goals of psychoanalysis, namely the exploration of the subconscious. They sought to achieve a state of "surreality" by blurring the boundary between the conscious and subconscious minds, hoping that a sense of self-discovery would emerge. Closely tied to psychotherapy, surrealism, as established by Breton, sought therapeutic effects through different approaches, some of which were considered in this thesis. *Parade*,

despite being a highly diverse production in terms of artistic styles and disciplines, unites around the general theme of creating an "illusory" worldview or a "dream-like" experience. The ballet, therefore, might act as a vessel to the subconscious, or even as the key to the resolution of a troubled mind embedded in the fears of wartime society with the help of the illusory techniques that were designed to blur the boundary between the conscious and subconscious. The transition between the scenes featuring the Little American Girl (Act 2) and the Acrobats (Act 3) demonstrates this point visually and sonically on stage:

> To the shimmering ostinato that introduced her, the Little American Girl fades from the scene, the spell of her wistful farewell suddenly broken by the awkward spectacle of Picasso's grotesque Horse, whose antics are all the more comic in the absence of the orchestra, an unexpected silence that appears puzzling even to the Horse as it hesitates, then invents a kind of clumsy soft-shoe shuffle of its own, its front and back ends not infrequently working at cross purposes.[187]

The absence of the orchestra, like the horse itself, is perplexing. Yet the goal appears to have been a kind of provocative awkwardness. The silence from the orchestra pit only intensified the strangeness of the choreography, creating a simultaneous sonic and visual illusion that allows the audience to explore the sense of "self" in their attempts to come to terms with their interrupted expectations. In other words, the process can reveal deep-seated psychological concerns and obsessions. The audience may, for the first time, reflect on their biases as the deep concerns of their inner reality surface to the logical conscious mind. The two mental states, subconscious and consciousness, then, collide creating an opportunity for resolution between the two states that, according to the surrealist methodology, should have effects akin to psychotherapy. Considering the surrealist approaches to artistic creation and interpretation, even without psychoanalyzing Satie and his collaborators, the emotional and psychological impact of the ballet can be understood with some clarity in the contexts of psychoanalysis and surrealism.

[187] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 206.

Far from being merely amusing, the ballet is shot through with fear, danger, anxiety, and melancholy, achieved through the use of the expressive media of the visual arts, music and sound, choreography, and narrative. Gillmor's description of the ballet, echoing that of Georges Auric, captures the otherworldliness of the experience:

> [The scene], featuring the two Acrobats, unfolds to a melancholy waltz-tune whose cool impersonality is underscored by icy glissandi on the bouteillophone and mechanical ostinato picked out in the brittle tones of the xylophone, the symmetry of its rigid foursquare structure set in bold relief by the periodic intrusion of short passages of asymmetrical phrasing which, in effect, keep the aerial artists slightly off-balance as they glide through their dangerous high-wire routine.[188]

The moment Gillmor describes marks the pivotal point of the performance before the reunion of the all of the cast members in the finale.[189] Throughout, the music plays a significant role in hinting at the "inherent danger of the high-wire act"[190] with asymmetrical musical phrases and brittle, glassy tones indexically implying fragility and fracture from, perhaps, a sudden fall. The tension continues into the final scene, which Gillmor explains as follows:

> The performers on stage . . . frantically recapitulate their routines to the nervous acceleration of the music, crowned by one last frenetic statement of the Managers' dehumanized ostinato. It is cut short, unresolved, as the performers freeze in a final tableau, a tableau, in the words of one commentator, born of despair and rejection.[191] Very softly a version of the fugal theme heard near the beginning returns in the upper strings. They are joined by low strings, brass, and two woodwinds and slowly the curtain falls to a swelling C major chord, thus bringing the music full circle.[192]

The framing fugue of the *Suite au* "*Prélude du Rideau rouge*" that brings the ballet "full circle" marks the ending to a story of physical risk, desperation, anxiety, and failure of coaxing people to see the show that only "happens on the inside." This final illusory musical dimension

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[188] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 206.
[189] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 207.
[190] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 207.
[191] Conrad DeBold, "'Parade' and 'Le Spectacle intérieur': The Role of Jean Cocteau in an Avant-Garde Ballet" (PhD diss., Emory University, 1982), 174.
[192] Gillmor, *Erik Satie*, 207.

disassociates the “dream” from waking life.

In *Parade,* all the media contribute equally to the emotional and psychological impact of the ballet. Surrealism in sound and music, therefore, cannot be defined apart from other facets of this multidisciplinary movement. Yet music, too, was there from the beginning. Surrealism in music proved achievable through numerous methods including automatism, illusory formal effects, acoustical illusion, collage, and stylistic allusion aiming to reveal subconscious turbulence by blurring the boundary between the “outside” and “inside,” a metaphor for conscious and subconscious, leading to a new discovery of higher or deeper truth. This work was not intended to be perceived as a form of social criticism or parody. The goal, rather, was to create a work that acted as a channel for self-exploration that helped achieve a state of higher reality, freed from the ordinary worldly experiences of the functioning conscious mind. As Breton puts it in the first manifesto, the goal of these works is to engage “the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.”[193] The major principle of surrealism, then, is Freud’s id in the artworld, put forth during a wartime reality of unidentifiable psychiatric agitation and discomfort coupled with alarming physical danger. The surrealists confronted that reality by turning inward toward a deeper truth.

[193] Quoted in Passeron, *Surrealism,* 44.

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